

The Director of Central Intelligence
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National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: George Kolt
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SUBJECT: West European Considerations in Soviet
Arms Control Strategy

1. Soviet statements on the probable resumption of the arms control dialogue indicate that, for now, the Soviets are concentrating on positioning themselves rather than preparing to deal with the substance of the issues:

- they claim talks are now being resumed at Soviet initiative;
- they charge the US with deliberately torpedoing the previous talks;
- they are continuing their attacks on West Germany for bearing the main responsibility for the deployments of INF in Europe.

2. As for the Soviet perspective on the talks:

- their main objective is clearly to stop the SDI;
- a second objective is to influence US/NATO decisions on military spending;
- they have relegated INF to the background, and one report suggests that this is no longer a very important issue for them. (From a strategic perspective this makes sense, since there is not much difference for the Soviets to have 200 or 600 missiles in Europe.)

3. The essence of Soviet strategy may be:

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- to begin talks on SDI and possibly accept a resumption of talks on strategic systems in response to the US Administration's insistence on treating both defensive and offensive systems;
- to declare the resumption of INF talks impossible as long as deployments continue, thus aiming to obtain a freeze on deployments.

4. The Soviet calculation may well be:

- if there is a resumption of START (linked with SDI) without a simultaneous resumption of INF talks, the Europeans will most likely interpret this as a renewed decoupling and would probably become more attracted to the idea of a freeze on INF deployments;
- Germany is vulnerable to this strategy. It is, after all, a country where an embattled Chancellor Kohl is operating without a national security consensus and where the opposition SPD is in the throes of a left-right battle over what its security platform should be. Continued Soviet attacks on West German revanchism (highlighted by the Moscow-directed polemical outburst of the Soviet MBFR representative last week) are probably intended to complicate the situation in Germany and make it more amenable to being used as a lever to influence US policy;
- the Soviets will undoubtedly play to other West European audiences as well (e.g., the Gorbachev visit to the UK this month, the Gromyko visit to Holland in March, and a possible Gromyko visit to Italy unless the Papal assassination trial intervenes).

5. For the US, the implications of all this are:

- little is to be gained and much lost by letting the Soviets perpetuate the legend that the US is coming back to the talks as a penitent demandeur;
- it is essential that INF remain in the forefront of our arms control concerns and that we not fall into the Soviet trap of recreating the decoupling approach of the 1970s;
- as onerous and time-consuming as it may be, close and continued involvement of the West Europeans in our strategy deliberations is needed if we are to avoid having Western Europe become publicly critical of us and prey once again to the domestic turmoil which plagued initial INF deployments.

6. This Memorandum has been coordinated with the NIO/USSR.


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